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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE NAMA HOTTENTOTS OF SOUTHWEST AFRICA[1]

By A. WINIFRED HOERNLÉ

101 THE people with whom this paper deals live in the territory known to-day as the Protectorate of Southwest Africa. They form one branch of the people known generally as the Hottentots, but from the very earliest days of the Dutch settlement at the Cape this branch of the Hottentot peoples has been called the Namaqua, and Nama is the name by which they call themselves to-day. The meaning of the word is unknown, but it is, according to tradition, the name of a remote ancestor of all the tribes calling themselves by the name. The old form, Namaqua, is probably derived from the dual form, *Namakka*, *Nomab* being the masculine singular, *Nomas* the feminine singular, and *Nomaa* the common plural.

101 131 To the early Dutch settlers two groups of the Nama were known, viz., the Little Namaqua, inhabiting what is known to-day as Little Namaqualand, and the Great Namaqua who inhabited what is to-day known as Great Namaqualand. Both of these groups of people at times visited the settlement at Table Bay,

104 [1] In transcribing the Hottentot words, I have used the system of E. Dulsio's *Woordenlijst der Khoi Khoin*, Berlin, 1909, as this is the system used by the Nama themselves nowadays in their writing. It is not entirely accurate always from a phonetic point of view, especially for the Swartland pronunciation, but it is the conventional script of the Nama, and in this paper which is not concerned with phonetics it seemed best to follow it.

There are three tones in Nama each of which may give an entirely different meaning to an otherwise identical word. ' indicates a low tone, ' a medium tone, " a high tone. In order not to complicate the manuscript, I have indicated these tones only where it is essential in order to avoid confusion in the reading.

= is the sign of nasalizing. - indicates a long vowel; X indicates a harsh guttural *ch* something like the Dutch *ch*.

/ indicates the dental click, ≠ the palatal, ! the cerebral, // the lateral.

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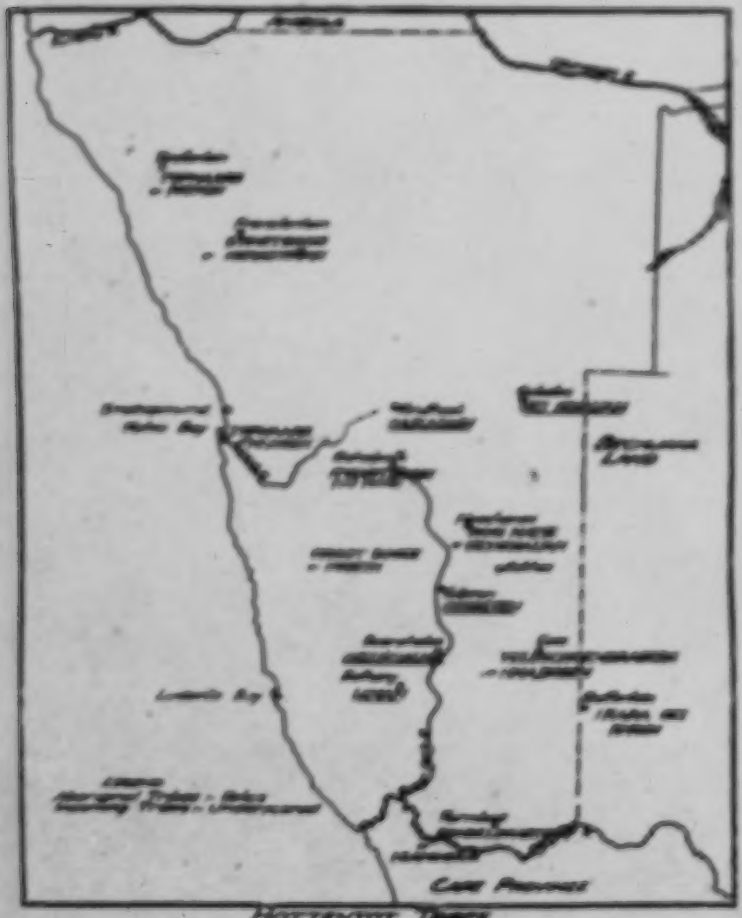
and their area of migration seems to have been a very wide one in the early days. But the Great Namaqua were always the most northerly group of the Hottentot peoples, and early in historical times they settled definitely in the country to the north of the Orange river.



HOTTENTOT TRIBES OF THE SOUTHWEST AFRICAN PROTECTORATE

The whole area of the Southwest African Protectorate is approximately 322,450 square miles, and Great Namaqualand

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occupies approximately two fifths of this area. In the past the northern limit of the Nama was indefinite until the pressure from the north by the Herero became serious, and certainly since the early part of the last century the Nama have been chiefly concentrated in the area of Great Namaqualand. This country is a high level plateau, or tableland, with an average altitude of 3,500 feet above sea level. Along the coast there is a strip of absolute sandy waste, of varying width but averaging about 35 miles across. The country rises rapidly from the coast inland, and the central tableland is cut off from the desert strip, or Namib, by a plateau range of sandstone formation running from north to south with an average height of 4,500 ft. The northern boundary is formed by the Awas mountains, a rugged mass of primary formation rising to a height of 7,200 feet above sea level and forming the watershed of the country. The rainfall over the whole area is extremely small, averaging from 4 inches in the south to 12 inches in the north. The country is, then, on the whole a barren plain with sparse vegetation and little permanent water. Yet after a season of sufficient rains it becomes a waving sea of grass, admirably suited both to cattle and sheep.

Such is the home of the nomadic pastoral Nama who originally owned great herds of large-boned, long-horned cattle and flocks of fat-tailed hairy sheep. Before the coming of the missionaries these people wandered about from fountain to fountain, seeking pasture for their stock. Large permanent fountains, or pools in river beds were claimed as their property by the different groups, rather than areas enclosed by definite territorial boundaries.

There are at present in the Protectorate, besides remnants of the various groups of the Great Namaqua with which this paper is mainly concerned, remnants of other groups who came in from the south of the river in the early part of the nineteenth century, when the general movement of the Hottentot peoples was away from the white settlements. These incoming groups spoke practically the same language as the Nama groups; indeed, the language throughout the area is very similar, so that one can hardly even speak of dialects, though undoubtedly there is a slight difference of vocabulary in the widely separated groups and, in some cases, a slightly different intonation.

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some cases, a slightly different intonation. These incoming groups were remnants of different tribes, mostly of Little Namaqua stock, who had, however, before their migration received a considerable infiltration of white blood. A great many of the men also spoke Dutch and the general culture had in many ways been influenced by contact with the Dutch and other colonists. These groups are called collectively Orlams by the indigenous people, a name the origin of which is doubtful. They penetrated into the territory of their kinsmen, at first peacefully by paying a small tribute for the use of the water of certain fountains, but later there was a great deal of fighting between the different sections, and the Orlams in the second half of the 19th century certainly had the upper hand in every way owing chiefly to their prior possession of firearms. The chief of these incoming groups are the Africaners (*//Aisa //aixa*), the Witbooi (*/Haiseb*), the Bethany Hottentots (*/Awaxa*), the Berseba Hottentots (*/Hei /Khawaxa*), the Amraal Hottentots (*Gei /Khawaxa*). It will be seen that the Dutch names for these groups are taken partly from the names of their chief settlements, e.g., Bethany, Berseba, partly from their chief leaders, Africaner, Amraal, Witbooi. The Hottentot names are taken mostly from the name of the supposed first ancestor of the people, e.g., */Khawaxa* from the personal name, */Khawab*, which is not now thought of as having any special meaning. There were two branches of these people, the older branch or the big (*gei*) branch, and the light-coloured branch (*/hei*). On the other hand, the Witboois have a Hottentot nickname, */Haiseb*, from */haiseb* or */haiwa*, lazy, which they do not like at all. For most of the names of these groups, or "tribes," as I shall call them later, it is not now possible to find any clear meaning, nor are the names thought of as having any meaning by the people themselves; they are proper names and no more.

The indigenous people were in historical times divided into seven main groups, with one or two subsidiary ones which are known to have been late offshoots from these main groups. According to the traditions of these people they are all descendants of one line of ancestors. One form of this legend was told to me by Abraham Kafir, a headman of the Bondelswarts, in 1913. There

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were once, so he said, five brothers, each one of whom was the founder of a tribe of the Nama. The eldest was the ancestor of the *Gei //Khauan*, or Rooi Natie, the tribe acknowledged by all the others to be the senior tribe among them. The other brothers are said to have founded the *!Gami ǂnau* or Bondelswarts, the *//Habobeb* or Veldschoendragers, the *!Khara Gei Khoin* or the Simon Kopper Hottentots, and the *//Khaw /gaun* or the Swartboois, who are said to be the descendants of the youngest brother. According to another legend, the *//Habobeb* are a branch of the *!Gami ǂnau*, and this agrees with the information given to us by the traveller Sir James Alexander, who reports that when he visited the *!Gami ǂnau* in 1836 the *//Habobeb* were still part of the people owing obedience to the *!Gami ǂnau* chief.[1] The other two major groups of these Nama people, the *//O gain* or Groot Doode, and the *ǂAonin* or Topnaars or *!Gumin*, are not linked up with the others in the legend of the five brothers, but they themselves claim to be offshoots from the Rooi Natie, and the Rooi Natie on their side support this claim.

The names of these tribes are in many instances exactly translated by the Dutch names by which they are now chiefly known. Thus the *//O Gain* are the great dead, or Groot Doode as the Dutch has it; the *!Gami ǂNau* are the people of the black bundle or Swart Boodel. Their own legend concerning their name is that they once formed one group with the Rooi Natie; that on the death of an old chief his sons quarreled among themselves, the elder going off with his supporters, while the younger brother stayed behind with his little group of people huddled together so that they looked like a little black bundle. The *//Habobeb* are called after a kind of sandal worn by the people (Dutch, *Veldschoen*, Nama, *//Habeb* or *//Howeb*). The Rooi Natie and the Swartboois are closely related. As late as 1855 the chief of the Rooi Natie expected the Swartboois to obey his orders concerning migrations, etc., but they did not always do so.[2] The Nama names by which these two groups are called still record this close

[1] Sir James Alexander, An Expedition into the Interior of Africa, 2 vols., London, 1838. Pp. 187, 197.

[2] Berichte der Rheinischen Mission, 1855, p. 18.

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connection. They mean the big group of //Khauae, and the young group, or, literally, the children, of the //Khauae. The derivation of the name //Khauae I do not know. The Topnaars, or the ≠Aunin, are the people of the point, referring to their inhabiting the sea coast, the extreme point of occupation of the Nama. An alternative name is the !Gamie of which I do not know the meaning.

All these groups which I have enumerated I propose to speak of as "tribes," for, in spite of their claim to a common ancestry, these groups have been for a long time independent of one another. Each group has its acknowledged chief and its acknowledged fountains, though before the coming of the white man and of the Oelams the boundaries between the different groups were not marked in any clear manner. In an old document, translated in the Rhenish Missionary Record for 1854,[4] the chief of the Rooi Nation complains that the Berseba Hottentots have taken possession of one of his fountains. He gives them permission to stay, but states specifically that this does not mean that he gives over the fountain to them; "the water is my water," he says again and again. We shall also see a little later that the different water holes, or fountains, in the country were always thought of as belonging to certain specific groups. This did not mean that other people could not use this water, but that one group had a prior claim to it established by habit, and had the right to expect that any other group intending to camp there for long would ask permission to do so.

A certain light is thrown on the antiquity of these different divisions of the Nama people by the record of the travels of the Frenchman, Le Vaillant. Travelling north of the Orange river in 1783, he came to an encampment of Hottentots who called themselves Gami nu Khoin.[5] The place to which he went, and the name, both point to the fact that he found himself among the *!Gami ≠Nun*, or *!Gami ≠Nu Khoin* (*Khoin* meaning "people"), so that at least as early as 1783 the *!Gami ≠Nun* formed a distinct group.

[4] p. 188.

[5] F. Le Vaillant, Second Voyage dans l'Interieur de l'Afrique, Vol. II, p. 261. The author spells the name "Cammenaquois."

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At the present day some of these tribes are extinct; that is to say, the tribal unity is totally destroyed, though one may still come across individuals claiming to belong to one or other of these tribes. But even where there is still a small remnant of people holding together under the leadership of a man whom they regard as a headman, or chief, the whole culture and power of the Nama is hopelessly destroyed. The history of all these tribes for the last 150 years has been one of incessant strife, first among themselves, owing to the dislocation caused by the incoming of the tribes from the south; next with the Hereros, a Bantu tribe advancing on them from the north; and last with the Germans who finally broke down the tribal cohesion completely, except in the case of the Berseba Hottentots, who remained loyal to their contract with the Germans and never fought against them.

All the tribes, further, have a great deal of mixed blood, brought into them first by their own relatives from the south, and then by mixture with the Germans. The generation which is growing up to-day in the Protectorate is practically all of mixed blood.

With regard to the numbers of these people, it is extremely hard to give any trustworthy figures. Palgrave, who was sent up to Namaqualand as a Special Commissioner by the Cape Government in 1876, to report on whether it was advisable for that government to assume responsibility for the territory, gives the figures of the various tribes as follows.[6] The figures are approximate: *Gei //Khauan* 2,500, *≠Aonin* 750, *//O Gein* 800, *//Khau /Gaun* 1000, *//Hoboben* 1800, *!Khara Gei Khain* 800, *!Gami ≠Nun* 2000, Africaners 800, Witbooïs 2500, Bethany Hottentots 2000, Berseba Hottentots 700, Gobabis Hottentots 600. Altogether, with a few groups not known to-day, the number in 1876 was 16,850. In 1921, the census returns estimated a population of 20,000 people called Hottentots,[7] but there was no attempt to discriminate the pure blooded from those of mixed

[6] Report of W. Coaton Palgrave, Esq., of his Mission to Damaraland and Great Namaqualand in 1876. Cape Town: Printed by Saul Solomon & Co., 1877. [G. 30-'77]. p. 94.

[7] *Cf.* Administrator's Report for S. W. Africa, 1922, p. 10. [U. G. 21-1923].

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K1 blood, and there is no accurate estimate of the numbers belonging to the different tribes. The Swartboois, whom I visited in 1923, numbered a little over 200. The Rooi Natie cannot count 100 adherents, while the Berseba Hottentots now claim over 3000 adherents. Most of the Hottentots are, as a matter of fact, scattered about over the length and breadth of the country among the farmers and have no longer any tribal allegiance, for it was the deliberate policy of the German government to break up the tribes.

619 361 The present administration has set aside certain reserves for the remnants of the Hottentots. Three of these reserves are already established, viz., a large one for the Berseba Hottentots, a smaller one for the Bondelswarts, and a small one for the Swartboois in Franzfontein; and besides these there are some farms which have been given to small remnants of other tribes. In addition, a number of Hottentots of various tribes are to-day to be found in the territory of the Rehoboth Bastards, while one tribe, the *!Khara Gei Khoin*, slipped across the border into British territory during the German-Hottentot war. The few survivors of this tribe are wandering to-day in the southern Kalahari. I have never come in contact with any members of this tribe.

178 It is obvious that the culture of a people so much harassed has suffered very greatly. It is, in fact, in the last stages of decay. After the rebellions against the Germans, the tribes were not allowed to keep "great stock," i.e., cattle, and only a limited number of sheep and goats, so that the old pastoral life fell more and more into decay. The people all claim to be Christians, and the influence of the Dutch, with whom they have long been in contact, can be traced in all of their institutions, even in their kinship system.

128 The social organization which I am about to describe, therefore, relates almost entirely to the past. The details of it have been gathered with great difficulty from the old headmen of the tribes, and much of it is little known to most of the younger generation.

621 614 If we study what I have called a tribe more closely, we shall find that in all cases it is composed of a number of patrilineal sibs,

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that is, of groups of people claiming to be related in the male line; and that one of these sibs claims seniority. The chieftainship is hereditary in this senior sib and is inherited in the male line. In some cases I have been given traditions of the formation of the tribe, the various sibs claiming relationship with one another in the far distant past, but in no case has it been possible to trace this relationship genealogically. Each sib names itself eponymously from its first known ancestor, or from the ancestor under whom it first claimed independence. The Nama themselves recognize these divisions into tribes and sibs, the tribe being called *!Haos*, and the sibs *!Hao !Nati*, that is, things within the tribe (*!haos*, tribe; *ba*, preposition in, turned into a noun by the suffix *s* for the singular or *ti* for the plural).

The sibs of the Swartbooi tribe are as follows: */Gari Geis; /Gari !Nagumun; /Gari ≠Karis; //Neigumun; Goaman; !Garuxun; //Khou Tanaxu; !Gu ei Tanaxu; !Naiz eis; !Ou Gaan.* Two of these sibs are formed by people who were incorporated in the Swartbooi tribe after the break-up of the Groot Doode tribe who at one time lived near the Swartbooie. (The old headquarters of the Swartbooi tribe were at Rehoboth. The tribe fled from there during the Africaner war with the Herero, and fought its way northwards to Franzfontein during the eighties of last century.)

Of the other sibs it will be noticed that three among them have the same name, */Gari*. The name */Garib* is still found among the Nama as a name of a person. The sibs are the big (*Geis*) */Garis*, the next (*!Nagumun*) */Garis*, and the little (*≠Karis*) */Garis*. Now, it is the Hottentot custom for all sons of a woman to have her name, and they are distinguished from one another by just the epithets used here, the eldest being called the big one (*geib*), the second the next one (*!nagumub*), the third the dark one (*≠nub*) or the light one (*/hoib*) or the tall one (*gaxub*), and so on, while the youngest will be called the little one (*≠kharib*) or the young one (*≠ami*).

The legend of the Swartbooie themselves is that they separated from the *Gei //Khaun*, the parent tribe, under the leadership of the */Garis* family, and that the three leaders became the ancestors of the three chief sibs of the tribe. The *//Khou Tanaxu*,

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the //Naigomon, and the /Gaunin are said to be sibs descended from the sisters of these brothers whose husbands remained with the wives' people, instead of taking their wives to their own tribes, or sibs, as is usually done. It is still a Nama custom that a woman should remain with her own people if there is good reason for it, and a woman often marries a man on that understanding. At the same time marriages between members of different tribes were very frequent in the past, and the women of a family might be scattered far and wide over the country after marriage.

When the tribe was first formed, the chieftainship was in the /Gari Gein sib, as one would expect, but nowadays the chieftainship has passed to the second branch, the /Gari !Naqumon. According to the headmen of the tribe, who corroborate what the present chief, David Swartbooi, told me, the chieftainship passed from the one sib to the other when the elder branch became almost extinct. There are to-day only two or three people represented in this sib.

There are in all ten chiefs concerning whom I obtained information. The earliest to be remembered is /Khanabib, who is followed in order by Tsumkan, Tsungab, Tsuxuab, ≠Aubib, Huiseb, William Swartbooi (Sir James Alexander's friend), then Huiseb's son Habib Abraham Swartbooi, then Habib's son Cornelius Swartbooi /Hoa/arab, then William Swartbooi's youngest son Habib ≠ami, and now the latter's son Hanamub David Swartbooi. David was from 1897 until 1923 a prisoner in Windhoek, owing to supposed intrigues against the Germans, but has now been allowed to go back to his tribe in Franzfontein. He is an old man now, so that his son, Petrus Swartbooi, Hara Geib, has actually been made headman of the tribe by the present Administration.

It is interesting to note that the /Gari !Naqumon are beginning to drop this name for the sib and to call themselves Tsuxuan, after the chief of that name whom they claim as the first chief to come from their sib. Further, there is a sib being formed from these Tsuxuan the members of which call themselves /Oa Goon, which means the younger branch of the chief's (good) sib. They have not taken any other name for themselves as yet, and are

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not likely to do so as the custom of using Dutch surnames is increasing and the old Nama names are falling into disuse. 614 551

There is no name for the families which together go to form a sib. They are also called *//Haw //Nati*. These families to-day have Dutch, or at any rate European, surnames, and though they claim to be blood kinsmen and in former days would not have intermarried, it is not now possible to trace any genealogical connection between these families. All the members of the chief's sib call themselves Swartboois, a name which seems to have been applied in the first instance to William Swartbooi whose Nama name, Hoiseb, however, means the root of a special kind of acacia. In the */Gari ≠Kaeis* sib we get the Hendricks as the chief family; in the */Garoxe* sib there are at least four families, the Swartboois, Gertzes, Richters, Van der Byls. The *//Neigwoe* sib has three families represented to-day, the Davids, the Swartboois, the Linders. The *Ou Gaon* are the Petersens, whilst the *Goamon's* are represented to-day by the Oriam family, the *//Khow Tsoaxe* by the Kido and the Brandts families, the */Gari Goin* by only one family, the *Matibis*, and the */Noisi oin* by the Beukes family. [582]

The analysis of the sib structure of this tribe shows, I think, the whole mechanism by which sibs and tribes are formed among the Nama. A large and flourishing family will very often have its own favorite pasturing grounds and be so large as to exclude members of other families or sibs. In course of time they become sufficient unto themselves, and the headman begins to play the part of chief. They arrange their migrations to suit themselves independently of the other members of the tribe, and in course of time are acknowledged to be independent. Then, as the families increase, descendants of the different brothers group themselves together more closely and form sibs and sub-sibs. In this way a new tribe develops from a sib, or a part of a sib, of the parent tribe. 614 621

My information is most complete and definite in regard to the Swartboois and the Topnaars, but, so far as it goes, the evidence from the other tribes is in complete agreement with the course of development outlined above. The Topnaar tribe is to-day divided into two sections. One of these lives far away to

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the north in the Kaokoveld whither it retired after the defeat of the Hottentots by the Hereros in the sixties of last century. The other section lives in the dunes around Walvis Bay and in the bed of the Kuiseb river at various places. The people in the north are reduced to a mere handful and those in the south are probably the most miserable of all the remnants of the Nama, though in Sir James Alexander's time they were described as being fine, handsome people.[1] My information about these people was obtained from the daughter of one of the last chiefs, an intelligent old woman, Khaxas, and from some of the headmen of the last recognized chief of the tribe, Piet //Elbib, who had himself died before I visited the tribe in 1912. According to the information of these old people, the tribe originally lived far to the north in the region to which one branch has again retired. When they first came to Walvis Bay, another Nama people, the /*Namixas*, were in control, one of the sibs of this people being called the *≠Ai* //*Kawasin*. These people were completely defeated and the remnant incorporated in the sibs of the newcomers who called themselves *Mu*//*ova*, so that today no /*Namixas* are to be found. The sibs of the *Mu*//*ova* are the //*Hawaibin Gein*; //*Hawaibin* /*Gaun*; the /*Nawabas*; the /*Ubasas*; and the /*Haibin*. There are today very few of these pure *Mu*//*ova* people left. The Nama population of Walvis Bay consists now of stragglers from all the tribes and of half-breeds of many different nations.

The sibs of the *Gei*//*Khauan* I have been able to learn from the few old men who still represent this tribe. One of these men, !*Gei ≠p*, claims to be the hereditary chief of the people and is so acknowledged by the handful who are left of this once large tribe. Most of the sibs named to me have now no representatives at all. The rest are represented by a few individuals. It is impossible to say whether the list is complete, because the Nama very easily forget a sib or family which has no representatives living.

The sibs are: /*Khabiros*; !*Nuriaia* (*extinct*); //*Nasi ≠nun*; //*Nasi* /*Abas*; /*Hana* !*Gaos*; //*Naobas* !*Garias*; /*Kobus*; !*Hoaro-*

[1] *L. c.*, vol. I, p. 72.

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sin; Gamadamin; //Gubu ≠Kurin; !Khoiun; !Gubu ≠Kurin; //Khau ≠Nun; //Khau Tanasin; ≠Khari ≠Namun.[1] The chieftainship was held by the *//Nami /abun*, the red *//Nanin*. Whether the term Rooi Natie, Red Nation, by which this tribe has always been called in Dutch, is derived from the name of this sib I do not know, but it may be. From the names of the sibs it is easy to see that there must have been many more sibs at one time. Thus, one sib is called the small *//Gubun* which makes it likely that there was at least one other *//Gubun* sib from which it had to be distinguished. Another sib is the small *!Gabun*, and so on. It will be noticed that there are two sibs called *//Khaun*, the *//Khau Tanasin* and the *//Khau ≠Nun*, while the whole tribe is called *//Khaun Gein* or *Gei //Khaun*. One of these sibs, the *//Khau Tanasin*, is the same as we found among the Swartboois, while the Swartbooi tribal name is taken from this same sib name, the *//Khaun /Goan*. The tradition of these two tribes, therefore, that they are originally one tribe, is corroborated by the evidence from the sib structure.

The *//Habobes* tribe is also broken up and scattered now. I have never lived among this tribe and have had to gather my information concerning it from chance individuals living in other tribes. In 1923 I visited a very old man of this tribe in the Windhoek gaol. He had been the chief advisor of the chief who had also been in prison but who had died. Unfortunately, the old man's memory was failing and I cannot be sure that the information from him is complete. The sibs, so far as I have them, are as follows: */Haoen; Dou Gein; !Amen; Garsin; Ourin.* The *Ourin* was the sib in which the chieftainship was hereditary.

The remnants of the */Khara Gei Khoin* are in the Kalahari desert, and none of the men I have met in the Protectorate have been able to give me any information concerning their old tribal structure. At the present day all these people have Dutch names.

The *!Gami ≠Nun*, though one of the old aboriginal tribes, have lived for so long on one of the highways into the Protectorate

[1] Seven of these sibs are mentioned by the first missionary to the Rooi Natie, Vollmer; cf. Rheinischer Missionsbericht, 1866, p. 277.

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614 621 that they have been very much exposed to incoming influences. To-day they have all Dutch surnames. I have, however, been able to collect some of the old Nama names which were in use before the European surnames came into common use. The chief's sib has now the surname Christian, and they call themselves the *!Gomi ≠Nun*. The Matros family have the Nama name *Tsibubis*. The Aprils are the *!Nanis*. The Hackshind family takes its Dutch name from a translation of the old Nama name *!Nanin* (*!Nan*—the heel). Another sib is called the *!Nurubis*; a third the */Ngiaxis*, another the */Aiinun*, who to-day also have the surname Christian. In giving me these names the old headman, Christian, gave me the fountains in the Bondelswart territory which were known as the headquarters of these different sibs.

The Orlam tribes, that is, the tribes who came into the territory from the south, have all surnames taken from Europeans, such as the Isaacs, the Goliaths, the Christians, the Hendricks, and I have found it impossible to get their old Nama sib names from them. In the *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, Band 15, 1901, however, there is an account of the sibs of the /Hobesin, given by the then Bezirkshauptmann von Burgsdorff in answer to a questionnaire sent out by Dr. Kohler. According to him there were seven sibs among the /Hobesin:

1) */Khowun* (families: Witbooi, Dragoners, Hanses, Kaisers).
2) *!Amin* (Isaacs, Gertses, Zals, Banks, Vishers).
3) *Dounon* (Jods, Clasens, Stewes, Sewis, Jahrs).
4) *!Noreses* (Jantzes).
5) */Khauon* (Piqueurs, Marius).
6) *!Hawe ≠*Nun (Romans, Jacobs, Links).
7) */Khoris* (Pitters, Fredericks, Jochems, Links).

This evidence from the Witboois is sufficient to show that the structure of these tribes from the south was essentially the same as that of the tribes of the Great Namaqua.

361 The families claiming to belong to a sib still tend to live together, though the old original camping order has long been given up. Information from many sources, however, enables one to reconstruct the old encampment, and this reconstruction agrees

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with information given to us by the early travellers among the Hottentots. 361

In the old days a Nama encampment was in the form of a great circle. The whole was enclosed with a great fence of thorn in which there were two gateways, one to the north, the other to the south. Within this fence, round the circumference, were the huts of the *!Haus*, or tribe. There might on certain occasions be a whole tribe encamped in such a manner, and, in any case, there were usually some representatives of each of the sibs at the chief's headquarters, though there might be other encampments in other parts of the tribal territory. In the great open space in the centre the cattle were herded at night. Special kraals were made for the calves and the lambs, but neither now nor in the past did the Hottentots make kraals for the cattle or the sheep. These animals just lie in front of the owner's hut for the night.

The following is the order in which the sibs of the Swartbools camped. In the western portion of the circle stood the huts of the chief's sib, facing east. On his left, as one faces east, came in order the *!Oa Gaon*, the *//Naigaman*, the *!Gurusin*, the */Gari Karin*, the *!Neise ein*. On his right in order came the *Goamun*, the *//Khau Tanasen*, the */Gari Gein*, and the *!Ga ei Tanasen*, meeting the *!Neise ein* in the east of the circle. The Topnaars encamped in the order *//Hornibin Gein*, *//Hornibin /Goan*, *!Noraban*, */Ubuxan*, */Heibin*, starting from the *//Hornibin Gein* in the west and continuing round the circle to the left. 621 614

Through the whole course of Nama history the sib was the strongest social unit the Nama ever attained. Time and time again a strong sib would go off on its own, asserting its independence of the others, and sib loyalty was always stronger than tribal loyalty. It is no wonder, then, that the chief among the Hottentots was little more than *primus inter pares*. He was acknowledged to be the head of the senior sib and, if a person of fine character, was accorded a great deal of respect, but the heads of the other sibs acted as his council and he could not do much without their coöperation. The whole conduct of affairs, then, in a Nama tribe was, and is, the concern of the older men of the tribe. [622] [623]

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614 582 The sib loyalty was very strong. Members of a sib all considered themselves to be blood relatives, and marriage in the sib was strictly forbidden. Nowadays, these rules are broken but the older men still shake their heads over the marriages of the younger generation.

614 627 Membership of a sib guaranteed to a person a very strong measure of protection, for he could always count on the support of his fellow sib members. We know from accounts left to us by travellers among the Nama in the early part of last century that at that time the vendetta was still in full force among them; that is, the chief was unable in the interests of the whole people to prevent two sibs from carrying out revenge one on the other, or to force them to accept compensation. Sir James Alexander gives an account[10] of such a vendetta among the Bondelswarts when he was travelling among them in 1836, and in the Rhenish Mission Record for 1856 there is an account[11] of another vendetta at Bethany among the !Aman Hottentots.

614 621 Though the old camping order of the sibs has long been given up, the order of camping of the families within the sib is still maintained in many instances, and could be studied among the Swartboois even in 1923. It has already been stated that among all the Hottentots all the sons of one woman are called by her big name, her *gei khoi /ons*, while all the daughters are similarly called after the *gei khoi /ons* of the father. In a settlement, therefore, we should expect to find the huts of a number of men called by the same name. This is exactly what we do find, and they are ranged in order of seniority, the eldest brother furthest to the right, the youngest furthest to the left, as we stand, facing outwards, at the doorway of any hut.

621 592 [595] In the past the Hottentots were polygynists, but never to the same extent as the Bantu tribes around them. Nowadays they are ostensibly monogamists, but the standard of morals is extremely low among them. Each family has its own mat hut where the children remain until they marry. I have found a number of

[10] An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa, 2 vols., London, 1838; vol. I, p. 187; see also p. 211.

[11] *Loc. cit.*, p.

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young girls sharing a hut together, and it may happen that a number of boys also share a hut, but this is not the general rule among the Nama. It is much more usual for the family to remain together until a new household is formed after marriage. Near each of the brothers in a family would be grouped his immediate dependents; his married sons on his right, the eldest furthest to the right, the youngest nearest to his father's hut, while on the left would be any married daughter who had not yet removed to her husband's people and any widowed sister who had come home to live with him. Other dependents of various kinds would also be camped to the left of a man's hut. Chief among these would be the *!Gan*, or servants, hardly to be called slaves, who were generally of the Berg Damara race, a people of negro affiliations which has long been in subjection to the Hottentots. Many Berg Damara even now are attached to Hottentot families as dependents. These people are free to marry as they will, and are never bought or sold, but they generally remain attached to the same family for long periods. Family servants is perhaps the best name for them. Many of those whose history I have studied were taken, or picked up, as small children by the Hottentots after one of the numerous wars when families were scattered and the children were left helpless in the veld, and they were then brought up in the family, acting as herdboys and in general counting themselves as members of the family. Intermixture of this black Race with the Nama is now taking place, but there is little trace of it having been frequent in the past.

It remains now to describe the conduct of people towards one another in the society, and this depends to a very large extent upon the kinship system, though relative age is also an important factor.

The kinship system of the Hottentots is a classificatory one with many similarities to the kinship systems found among the Bantu. The relative ages of the person speaking and of the person spoken of are very carefully recognised in these kinship terms. There is a special term for the mother's brother who stands in a very close relation to his sisters' children, and there are special

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terms for cross cousins, corresponding to the special relation in which these people stand to one another.

The following are the terms arranged according to generations in a scheme devised by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, which enables one to get a very rapid insight into the general system:—

Second ascending generation. There is one term, *//Náon*, used for all persons, men and women, of all generations above those of the mother and father. The same word means the tip of an arrow, and so refers to the beginning of the family as it were. The singular masculine form, *//Náob*, is used for men, the singular feminine, *//Náos*, for women. The term *//Náob* is applied to the father's father, and the mother's father, and to the brothers of these, and also to the fathers and the fathers' fathers of all these men. The term *//Náos* is used for the father's mother, for the mother's mother, for their sisters, and for the father's father's sisters.

First ascending generation. My father is *Tatab*, and the term may be applied to my father's brothers, the older ones being distinguished as *Tata Geip*, that is big father, the younger ones being distinguished as *Tata ≠Kami*, young father, or *Tatarob* which is the diminutive of Tatab. The term is further applied, with the proper modifications for older or younger, to the sons of my father's father's brothers, and to the husbands of my mother's sisters.

Other words for father are *Ĩp* and *Êip* which can be used in direct address; *//Gũb* (from the verb *//gũ* to be fertile) which is used only in speaking of the own father and never in direct address; and *Abob*, an archaic word used nowadays only in legends or in the Christian prayers translated into Nama.

My mother is *Mamas* and so also are her sisters, older ones being *Mama Geis*, younger ones *Mama ≠Kams* or *Mamaros*. The term is used also for the wives of my father's brothers.

Mamas is the familiar term for mother. The most dignified term is *Êis*, with its distinctions *Êis Keis* and *Êiros*. Another term is *Is* which can also be used in direct address. *//Gũs* is used only in speaking of the own mother, not in direct address.

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My father's sister is nowadays called *Mugis* (or *Mugiros*, if she is young), but the older men and women deny that this is a pure Nama word. There is a Dutch word *Moeke*, meaning little mother, and it is most likely that this, together with many other terms of kinship, has been adopted by the Nama from the Dutch. My most reliable informants tell me that the old Nama way of addressing the father's sister was *Êis Geis*, that is, big mother. This woman is also called *Tàras* or *Gei Tàras*,[13] the great respected one, and great deference is, or was, due to her. The father's sister's husband is called *Omeb* nowadays, a term most certainly borrowed from the Dutch Om(uncle). It can be used in the diminutive form *Omerob* also. This man may also be addressed as *Tatab* through courtesy, but there is no distinctive term applied to him.

[604]

My mother's brother is properly *//Náob* or *//Náosab*, but he may be called *Omeb* nowadays. His wife is *//Náos*, but she may be called *Mugis* now. The behavior due to this man will be described later.

Contemporary Generation. The children of my father, of my father's brothers, and of my mother's sisters, in fact, the children of all those whom I call *Tatab* and *Mamas* in their own right, are my brother, *!Gāb*, and my sister, *!Gās*. My older brother is *!Gāb Geib*, my younger brother is *!Gāb≠Kami*. The form *!Gāsab* may also be used. Nowadays, the forms *Butib*, *Butirob*, may be used from the Dutch Boetie (brother). My sister is *!Gās keis*, my younger sister *!Gās≠Kams* or *!Gāsas*. These terms are used by both men and women. The term *Sisis* is also in use, especially *Ousis*, from the Dutch *ou*, meaning old, and *Sussie*, meaning sister. The form *Sisiros* is formed with the Nama diminutive particle *ro*.

Nowadays, further, these relatives are sometimes distinguished as */Ge !Gāsab*, */ge !Gāsas* (from */ge* to have twins), that is, twin brother, twin sister, to distinguish them from the cross cousins who may be called *//Nûri !Gāsab*.

My father's sister's son is my *//Nûrib*. My father's sister's daughter is my *//Nûris*. These forms are used by both men and

[13] This word, *Tòras*, is to be very carefully distinguished from another *Tarás* which means wife.

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601 women. If I am a man, I may call my father's sister's daughter *Tarás*, that is wife, while if I am a woman I may call my father's sister's son *Aob*, husband. Nowadays, these cousins may be called *//Núri!Gāsab*, *//Núri !Gāsas*, but these forms are admittedly late.

My mother's brother's son is my *//Núrib*, or, like his father, my *//Náob*. Or he may be called by a descriptive term, *//Naob* (Nōap's son). He may also be called *//Núri !Gāsab*. A woman speaking may call him *Aob*.

My mother's brother's daughter is *//Núris*, or *//Núri !Gasas*, or she may be called *//Náos*. A man speaking of her may call her *Tarás*, wife.

First descending generation. The term applied to children is *ōan* or */Gōan* (boy *ōab* or */Gōab*, girl *Ōas* or */Gōas*), from the verb *oa*, to bear. These terms are applied to his own children by a man and to the children of his brothers, older or younger; and by a woman to her own and to the children of her sisters.

A man calls his sister's children *//Núrin* (*//Núrib*, *//Núris*), but there is no distinctive term by which a woman calls her brother's children. She uses a descriptive term, *!gāb Ōab*, *!gāb Ōas*, or *Tàrab Ōap*, *Tàrab Ōas*. Here we find the word *Tàrab* which is no longer used in reference to the brother himself but is still used in this combination. *Tāràb* corresponds to *Tàras* and means the one who must be respected.

Second descending generation. The children of any */Gōan* are *//Núrin*. This is, then, the reciprocal term of *//Náob* and *//Náos*.

Relatives by marriage. A wife calls her husband *Aob*. The term is applied also by a woman to her sister's husband and her husband's brother. An old term for husband, no longer used, is *Xáib* (from the verb *Xái*, to have sexual intercourse). A husband calls his wife *Tarás* (formerly *Xáis*). The term is applied also by a man to his brother's wife and to his wife's sisters. The general term for relatives by marriage is */Uin*, or *!Nā Khoin*, from the verbs */ùi* and *!nā* to become related by marriage. Thus, it is applied in the masculine form, */ùip*, to the wife's father, the wife's brother, the sister's husband, the daughter's husband by a man; by a woman it is applied to the husband's father and the brother's

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son. In the feminine form, */Uis*, it applies to the wife's mother and the son's wife when a man is speaking. It applies to the husband's mother, the son's wife, the husband's sister, and the brother's wife when a woman is speaking. 601

The husbands of two sisters call each other */Gámireb* or */Gámeb*. The wives of two brothers call each other */Gámes*.

!Oaras is a term sometimes used for the son's wife when a man is speaking. It is a general term applied to women who have married into the sib.

Practically all the old regulations with regard to marriage have broken down among the Hottentots. Marriage with any first cousin is now permitted, though on the other hand the older people are resisting the marriages of first cousins at all, whether direct or cross cousins. There is a difference here from tribe to tribe, some of them being more influenced by European contacts than others but the tendency in all is the same. All my older informants are agreed that the marriage of direct cousins was out of the question in the old days. With regard to the cross cousins there is some difference between the tribes. In some of them, e.g., the *//Haboben*, the *Gei //Khauan*, the *//Khau /Goan*, marriage with the mother's brother's daughter is said to have been far more usual than marriage with the father's sister's daughter. The terminology for these relatives seems however to show that in the past marriage with both the mother's brother's daughter and the father's sister's daughter was allowed, and the behavior towards these relatives confirms this. In addition, I have illustrations of both kinds of cross cousin marriage in genealogies. 582 177 184

The duties and privileges of relatives. The chief consideration in the behavior of Nama to one another is the relative ages of the people concerned. Respect for age is inculcated in every possible way, and the whole social organization of the people is an illustration of the fact. In the family deference and respect must always be paid to elders. Thus, of a number of brothers the eldest always has the honored place and the first voice in any debate. Family feeling is strong, however, and brothers generally hold together. The behavior proper to brothers is due to all those people called by the name "brother," and little difference is made by the fact 602 [535]

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602 that they are often sons of fathers who are brothers and not sons of one man. Similarly, all women who are called "sisters" must
602 be treated as sisters, and it would have been in the old days a most
582 heinous offense for a man to have married such a woman. It is an indication of the complete transformation of the organization of the people that has taken place owing to Christianization and European influence, that the marriage of direct first cousins is now relatively frequent. In the old days the behavior of a brother
602 and a sister was very strictly regulated. As tiny children they
593 ran about together, but once they were grown up, they had to avoid one another completely. A brother was not allowed to speak to a sister directly, he must never be alone with her in the hut, he must never speak of her except in the most respectful terms. A sister was a *tàras*, that is, a person to be respected, not to be spoken to or of lightly. In the old days an oath by a sister was one of the greatest oaths a man could take, and a sister could generally be relied on to stop any fight in which her brother was taking part. The brother is said to be shy (*sou*) in the presence of his sister, and the same is true of all the men a woman would call
[583] brother. Should one of these men use bad language in her presence a woman could demand a sheep from him with which to purify herself of the pollution. It is a *gei !Keis*, a great offense. Even at the present day a man will not sleep in his sister's hut when he visits her as a married woman. The eldest sister of a man is his *Gei Tàras*, his great respected one.

602 Quite different is the behavior of a man to those of his own
582 generation whom he calls *//Nûrin*. These women are his companions, his playmates. All is possible with them, free speech and horse play. Even sexual intercourse would not have been considered wrong. It was frequently one of these women that a man married in the old days.

604 The relation of a woman to her brother's children was one of great restraint. Just as the father himself had to behave with much circumspection towards this woman, so his children had to treat her with the greatest deference and respect.

The relation of a man to his sister's children was one of the greatest indulgence and good will. A boy could do almost any-

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thing at his maternal uncle's *!Hèis*, or home, without being blamed for it. He could take, without asking, any of the specially fine animals among his uncle's herds, and the uncle had no redress but to take misformed ugly animals from his nephew's herds. This exchange was called *//nâri //as*, and it is still practiced by the Nama to-day.

The only other relationship calling for special notice is that of a man to his relatives by marriage. To his wife's sisters, a man behaved much as he would to his wife, and even at the present day intercourse with them is common, if they are unmarried or widowed. Such relations are the cause of much trouble. A woman considered her husband's younger brothers as her husbands, and used in the old days to be inherited by one of them. In the early missionary records there are numerous instances of a younger brother taking over his elder brother's widow.[13] This practice is, of course, strongly condemned by the missionaries who report these things, and it is interesting to note that the women seem to have taken advantage of the objection on the part of the missionaries to avoid this relationship in some instances.

His wife's mother had always to be treated with the greatest deference by a husband. They were said to be "shy" of one another, and the man might never look at her when speaking to her. There used in the past to be a special form of address between all relatives-in-law, the formal "You" being applied both to the mother-in-law, to the brothers of a man's wife, and to her father, but it is not so used nowadays.

In addition to the strict prohibition against marriage in the sib, a man was not allowed to marry a woman of the same great name as himself, even though she might come from a tribe different from his own. Such a woman would be regarded either as a mother if much older, or as a daughter if younger than the man. Nowadays, this prohibition, too, has ceased to be observed. I have instances in the genealogies, though not many, of such marriages having taken place.

[13] Cf. Rheinische Missions Berichte, 1856, p. 321; also same Berichte, 1860, p. 21.

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601 602 It will be seen from the account given of the kinship system and the "behavior patterns" accompanying kinship terms that the type of behavior which is expected of a person by another is directly indicated by the kinship term in use between them, so that a knowledge of these relationships is essential for an understanding of the whole moral regulation of the lives of the people.

619 There is just one other subject on which a few remarks may be appropriate. The relation of the tribes towards one another has been throughout the history of the Hottentots most capricious. On the one hand, one finds a great deal of intermarriage taking place between those tribes which happen to be near one another, and a great deal of visiting between the members of families so connected is always going on. Yet, on the other hand, there has never been sufficient feeling of solidarity between the tribes, for the Nama, or for the Hottentots in general, to organize themselves against a common enemy even when the danger was exceedingly great. Always one tribe has been played off against the others by all other peoples with whom they have come in conflict. There are many instances in their history in which two tribes have made an agreement with one another for some common object, but such agreements have always come to naught. There is even an interesting document,[14] signed by most of the Nama and Orlam chiefs, agreeing to sink all differences and to unite against the common enemy, the Herero, but the agreement was never actually put into practice. So the Nama, and the Hottentots in general, are coming to be a people whose history lies all in the past, whose tribal organization is totally disrupted, and whose distinctive culture is becoming a thing unknown even to themselves, because of their failure to hold together, and to face the incoming cultures with a strong feeling of group solidarity.

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[14] Drawn up in 1858. Translated in the Administrator's Report for S. W. Africa, 1922.